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# Gerald J. Curran, state delegate

Longtime member of the General Assembly was well known throughout Northeast Baltimore's neighborhoods

 

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Gerald Curran (Staff File Photo 1998, Baltimore Sun / February 26, 1998)

By Jacques Kelly, The Baltimore Sun  
7:31 p.m. EDT, March 28, 2013

Gerald J. Curran, a member of a well-known political family who represented Northeast Baltimore neighborhoods in the **Maryland House of Delegates**, died of **pancreatic cancer** Wednesday at **Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center**. He was 74 and lived in Lauraville.

"Gerry was the epitome of a classic Irish personality, full of fun, love and courage," said former Speaker of the House Casper R. Taylor, who lives in Cumberland. "I am going to miss one of my dearest friends, but I know the Curran family will carry on his legacy."

Born in Baltimore and raised in the Montebello Terrace home where he spent most of his life, Mr. Curran attended St. Dominic's School and was a 1957 Calvert Hall College High School graduate. He earned a bachelor's and law degrees from the **University of Baltimore**.

"He is an affable man who frequently pals around with lobbyists and makes the rounds of legislative receptions that many lawmakers avoid for fear of political fallout," said a Sun article when he announced his

retirement from the House of Delegates in 1998.

The Sun's account called him a "fixture in the legislature ... no stranger to the Democratic Party officials who run the state." Mr. Curran had served in the House of Delegates since 1967.

The article noted that he was a member of a well-connected Irish Catholic family in the Northeast Baltimore community of Lauraville. It said, "The Curran name was a sure vote-getter."

His first cousin, former Maryland Attorney General J. Joseph Curran, said, "Gerry was a well-liked guy. And he loved **Annapolis** and politics."

He also recalled that his cousin had been active in Irish-American organizations and moved easily throughout what he called the "Irish village" of Northeast Baltimore.

"The old 3rd District had a lot of churches and ethnic groups," the former attorney general said. "Gerry was there campaigning in the Italian, German, Irish and African-American ones."

He said that Mr. Curran was also an early proponent of state aid to non-public schools. He also attended the 1976 and 1980 Democratic National Conventions.

"My father was a generous and humble man," said his daughter, Margaret C. Schneid of Baltimore. "He practiced old-fashioned politics. I recalled when I was child, a man came to the door and told my father he had no heat. My father wrote him a check on the spot. The next day, my mother brought the family groceries. They had five kids. His relationship with his community was very personal."

Mr. Curran's name was intertwined with local politics. An uncle, J. Joseph Curran Sr., was a 3rd District city councilman and leader of a Northeast Baltimore political organization.

In addition to being a first cousin to the former Maryland attorney general, he numbered among other first cousins **Robert Curran**, a member of the Baltimore City Council, and Martin "Mike" Curran, also a City Council member, who died in 1999. Another cousin, Sister Margaret Curran, was a well-known member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

"My father taught me the value of family," said his son, Gerald J. Curran Jr. of **Ocean View**, Del.



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The 3rd District became the 43rd District after a redistricting. Mr. Curran eyed becoming a state senator. In 1982, his first cousin, J. Joseph Curran, then a state senator, decided to run for lieutenant governor alongside Gov. Harry Hughes.

Delegate Curran "had his own designs on the [Senate] seat and pushed hard to take up the family senatorial mantle," a 1982 Sun article said. In the end, Mr. Curran assessed his chances and chose to remain in the House of Delegates, where he had greater seniority.

Mr. Curran also retained his insurance business and had a **Harford Road** office.

"It's a people business," he said in The Sun's article about his decision to retire from politics rather than to test ethics rules, which were changing in the 1990s.

"For years, he toiled quietly in the trenches of the House, somewhat of a back-bencher, generally a vote leadership could count on," The Sun's 1998 article said.

Mr. Curran was grand marshal of the 1975 **St. Patrick's Day** parade, an event for which he was also chairman. He was also associated with the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and the Ancient Order of the Hibernians.

He was also a former board member of the House of Ruth and helped the organization secure a home in Northeast Baltimore. He was honored by the organization in 1986.

A Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated Wednesday morning at St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, Harford Road and Pelham Avenue, where he was an active member. The hour has not been set.

In addition to his son and daughter, survivors include his wife of 56 years, the former A. Jeannette Brown; another son, John F.X. Curran of Baltimore; two other daughters, Kathleen C. Vetter of Baltimore and Elizabeth C. Calwell of Towson; two brothers, Brian M. Curran of Berlin in **Worcester County** and Denis A. Curran of Hockessin, Del.; 11 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

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